



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ALBANIA

FACT SHEET

Health

IMPROVED SELECTED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN TARGETED AREAS



Sixty-eight percent of Albanian citizens have access to family planning services, HIV/AIDS and STI care, and antenatal and breastfeeding information due to USAID efforts to improve primary health care in Albania.

PROJECTS

- Improving Primary Health Care in Albania (IPHC) Pro Shëndetit (Aug. 2003-Aug. 2006)
- Albania Family Planning Initiative (Sept. 2004-Sept. 2006)

CURRENT SITUATION

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) assessment conducted in 2005, Albania's population and disease profile is changing and Albania's health care system is ill prepared to face the growing incidence of non-communicable diseases and other health risks. The system—beset by a lack of standards in the provision of medical equipment and services, provides no regular training to upgrade the skills of doctors, nurses, and midwives, and has virtually no systematic collection of data or reporting—risks jeopardizing public health. Inadequate recurrent expenditures, obsolete drug therapies and outdated medical skills result in low quality of care and inefficient use of resources. Corruption and low levels of public and private investment in the sector weaken reforms and damage the public trust.

The availability and quality of reproductive health services and family planning counseling needs improvement, as only eight percent of the population uses modern contraceptives despite progress to increase access and demand.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

USAID seeks to help reform the primary health care system for it to respond better to the public health needs in Albania. As the health sector is faced with limited resources since the collapse of the centralized Communist system, better management of resources is imperative for a more responsive health system. The program aims to improve the management of the limited available resources, develop a set of quality services offered and delivered at the primary care level, and effect the use of these facilities by the Albanians living in rural and urban areas. Within the program on primary health care, USAID/Albania implements program activities targeted for family planning/reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and safe motherhood policies and programs.

PROGRAM FOCUS

- Strengthening the Government of Albania's health reform efforts to create a fully integrated primary health care system to respond to the basic health needs of the population. Services target reproductive health, family planning, HIV/AIDS/STIs and tuberculosis;
- Facilitating health care delivery by improving clinical competency, management, planning and budgeting skills for both central and local health authorities;
- Promoting awareness, advocacy and participation in the primary health care at the community level.

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Dr. Ajet Veleshnja stands in front of some of his recent training certificates and discusses his hopes for the future of the small, rural clinic he operates in Lapardha.

SUCCESSES

- Improvements in care delivery in an increasing number of facilities—as the program grows nation-wide—through provider training, facility management, clinical practice guidelines, and community involvement;
- The national roll out of a health information system based on patient encounter data that facilitates Primary Health Care management;
- Establishment of quality assurance boards in five regions to establish and monitor the quality of services delivered at health care centers, a first step towards the accreditation of health facilities nationwide;
- Establishment of cervical cancer screening at the Women's Wellness Center in Tirana, which serves as a nation-wide training facility;
- Sixty-eight percent of Albanian citizens have access to family planning services, HIV/AIDS and STI care, and antenatal and breastfeeding information. Family planning services are provided in ninety-five percent of the country with a two-fold increase in demand for family planning services over the past year;
- A USAID-funded Contraceptive Logistics Management Information System was adopted by the Government of Albania—ensuring the necessary information to allow for a continuous supply of modern contraceptives;
- USAID assisted the Contraceptive Security Commission to carry out the first national Reproductive Health Strategy.

Contact Information:
USAID/Albania
Tel: + 355 4 241 999
<http://albania.usaid.gov>